



Short Safety Subject

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www.bragg.army.mil/psbc-bm/PubsAndForms/ShortSafetySubjects.htm

None For The Road

Thanks to increased public service campaigns about driving while impaired by drugs and alcohol, many of us know that drunk or drugged driving is never a good idea.

However, even though statistics reflect a decreased long-term trend in fatal crashes related to drugs and alcohol, the figures remain alarming. The most recent figures show that almost 16,000 people died in alcohol-related crashes last year. This means that, last year, one person died every 33 minutes, simply because someone decided to get behind the wheel of a car after having too much to drink. This figure does not even include those fatal crashes that may have been caused by "drugged" driving.

Given such statistics, it's not surprising that some safety agencies estimate that 3 in 10 Americans will be involved at some point in an alcohol-related crash. Unfortunately, these figures mean that quite a few people are still having one for the road.

In the face of such overwhelming statistics, it's easy to feel that there's nothing you can do to put an end to driving under the influence. In fact, however, there's a lot you can do to make our roads safer.

Taking Care of Yourself

First, make sure you always avoid driving impaired. Not only will you stay safe and avoid endangering others, but you'll also be leading by example.

When you know you'll be drinking, start the evening by taking cabs or public transportation. That way, you won't have to make a decision about driving when you're least able to do so. If you're going out with a group of people, select a designated driver.

Getting the Keys

Though it's easy to make sure you avoid driving under the influence, it can be a lot tougher to stop others from driving when they shouldn't. If you're in a situation where you need to convince someone else not to drive, remember some of the following pointers advocated by safety experts:

- Be calm and logical. Clearly explain that it would be better if someone else drove or if they took a cab.
- Use humor. This helps avoid making the person feel embarrassed or threatened when you ask that they don't drive.

- Point out that you're doing them a favor. Emphasize that you don't want the individual to hurt themselves or others.
- Refuse to go with them. If it's someone you were supposed to get a ride with, tell them that you'd rather walk anywhere than get in a car with an impaired driver; stick to your refusal.
- Hide the keys. If all else fails, distract the driver and take the car keys. Often, the impaired person will think that the keys are lost and will find another way to get home.

Keeping Your Eyes Open

With impaired drivers still involved in thousands of accidents, it is clear that enough people are not looking out for themselves or others. For this reason, you need to watch for certain cues that may indicate when another motorist is impaired. Be especially alert during weekends and evenings, when most alcohol and drug-related accidents tend to happen.

Law enforcement officials generally look out for the following behaviors in spotting impaired drivers:

- Improper lane position (weaving, swerving, etc.)
- Erratic acceleration and breaking (inexplicable stops, bursts of speed, etc.)
- Inappropriate responses to directional markers (driving the wrong way on a one-way street, running a red light, not moving when a light turns green, etc.)
- Other driver errors (driving without lights at night, tailgating, problems turning, etc.)

If you see another motorist exhibiting any of the above behaviors, get safely out of their way as soon as you can.

Try to note as much as you can about the car, the driver's appearance, and the license plate number. Call 911 as soon as possible. The worst-case scenario for an impaired motorist isn't having a driver's license suspended or revoked; the worst-case scenario for an impaired motorist is adding more people to the already grim set of fatal accident statistics.

**The answer to "One for the Road?" is always "None for the road."
You can do a lot to make our roads safer.**